



## RESPECT FOR LIFE COMMISSION

CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF SALT LAKE  
CITY

# Diocese of Salt Lake City Respect for Life Commission Objectives

## USCCB Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities

Full description - <https://www.usccb.org/prolife/pastoral-plan-pro-life-activities>

*Adapted for the Diocese of Salt Lake City*

### Diocesan Respect for Life Commission

The Diocesan Respect Life Commission coordinates activities of the pastoral plan within the diocese. The commission, through the diocesan Marriage and Family Life director, will receive information and guidance from the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. The diocesan commission is headed by the diocesan Marriage and Family Life director, a person appointed by and responsible to the diocesan bishop. Its membership, in addition to the diocesan Marriage and Family Life director, includes a chairperson and its members may include the following: the diocesan respect life coordinator (if a separate post); representatives of diocesan agencies (e.g., family life, education, youth ministry, post-abortion ministry, diocesan newspaper, liturgy, health apostolate, social services, etc.); representatives of lay organizations (e.g., Knights of Columbus, Council of Catholic Women, etc.); medical, legal, public affairs, and financial advisors; representatives of local respect-life groups (e.g., pregnancy resource center); and representatives of parish respect life committees. All committee members must be approved by the Bishop of the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

The Diocesan Respect Life Commission's objectives are to:

- direct and coordinate the diocesan and parish respect life information and educational program, providing appropriate resources as necessary
- provide educational opportunities and time for sharing program information among members of parish respect life committees
- support local programs that counsel and assist women with problems related to pregnancy; promote establishment of new programs where needed
- encourage and support a diocese-wide programs for women, men and families including post-abortion ministries (Project Rachel, Walking with Moms in Need)
- encourage and support local programs that provide care for the sick, aging and dying
- encourage and coordinate programs of prayer and worship that focus on the dignity and sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death
- maintain working relationships with local respect life groups (including respect life alternatives to the death penalty, poverty relief, commission for the disabled and other entities) and encourage the development of local respect life lobbying networks
- maintain a local public information program that monitors print and broadcast media's treatment of respect life issues, and prepare appropriate responses in conjunction with the diocesan director of communications
- undertake, depending on financial resources, appropriate public advertising campaigns
- develop responsible and effective communications with each elected representative: getting to know them personally through one-on-one visits, telephone calls, letters, and e-mail in conjunction with the diocesan Office of Life, Justice and Peace
- through the Family Life Director, maintain communications with the USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities
- report periodically to the diocesan bishop on the status of implementation of the pastoral plan

In Summary, the Respect Life Commission, under the Salt Lake Diocese Office of Family Life, with direction from the Most Very Reverend Bishop Oscar Solis in partnership with the Office of Life, Justice and Peace, and with the guidance of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities is charged with the following activities:

- support for deaneries, individual parish ministries and Catholic schools in the areas of education, pastoral care, prayer and worship and public policy advocacy
- collaboration of ministry activities across deaneries, parishes and Catholic schools in order to increase the effectiveness and maximize the benefit of shared resources in support of the universal mission of the Church and the Diocesan Pastoral Plan
- planning and facilitation of annual diocesan-level activities and events
- consultation with parish pastoral leaders to assist with development of parish ministries, the provision of timely ministry-specific information and relevant resources and materials

**Note:** All outside groups, organizations, programs must be vetted and approved by the Director's of the Offices of Marriage & Family Life, Life Justice and Peace, and Faith Formation.

## Parish Respect Life Committee

Actively promoting a renewed respect for human life is the responsibility of every Catholic. The parish respect life committee assists in a special way by helping to make the parish a center of life, a place where parishioners understand the issues and the importance of meeting the needs of those who are most vulnerable—especially mothers and their unborn children, those who are seriously ill or dying and their families, and those who lack access to basic needs for a life of dignity. It may be a distinct committee, or it might be a subcommittee of another parish organization. Whatever its structure, its membership should include representatives of both adult and youth parish groups, members of organizations that represent persons with disabilities, persons of minority cultures, and those responsible for education and pastoral care.

The chairperson or coordinator of the parish committee is appointed by the pastor, and it is important that the two be able to work well together. The chair recruit's volunteers to help meet the needs the committee serves. Parish committees should be mindful of the need for renewal from time to time in regard to membership, talents, and interests.

The parish respect life committee relies on the Diocesan Respect Life Chairperson and the Marriage and Family Life Director for information and guidance. The committee should play a vital role in parish life and enjoy the strong support of priests and other key personnel. The committee should also dovetail its efforts from time to time with other programs of the parish. For example, in many parts of the country, parishes conduct programs where parishioners study and discuss the teachings of the faith. Members of the respect life committee should take part in such programs and invite other program leaders to take part in respect life initiatives.

The objectives of the parish respect life committee are to:

- coordinate parish implementation of the annual Respect Life Program, promoting it to agencies and organizations in the parishes, especially schools and religious education programs; and encourage parish discussion groups to use the program as a basis for their discussions
- promote and assist pregnancy counseling and comprehensive maternity support services, as well as post-abortion counseling and reconciliation programs (e.g. Walking with Moms in Need, Project Rachel, St. Martha's Baby Project, etc.), and make these well known in the parish and local community
- develop or adopt, where feasible, a parish-based ministry to pregnant women and their children (Walking with Moms in Need)
- encourage and support parishioners' involvement in services to help those who are chronically ill, disabled, or dying and their families

- sponsor programs of prayer in the parish to pray for mothers and their unborn children, for those who are dying, for those who are disabled, for prisoners on death row and those they have harmed, and indeed for all who are in need, that the culture of death that surrounds us may be replaced by a culture of life
- foster awareness of the need to restore legal protection to the lives of unborn children to the maximum degree possible and to safeguard in law the lives of those who are chronically ill, disabled, or dying
- keep parishioners informed of upcoming important legislation; and, at the direction of the diocesan respect life director, organize letter-writing, postcard campaigns, or similar appropriate activities when important votes are expected

## Diocesan Deanery Representatives

Commission members will work together to plan, coordinate, and select areas that we will be working on and programs/events that we will create and implement.

Deanery Representatives will communicate those to the pastors and parish respect life committees where applicable in their deanery and ask how the commission can help them.

The Deanery Reps objectives are:

- Determine who is best to contact at each parish (Pastor, Deacon, Pastoral Assistant, Respect Life Committee/Coordinator, etc.) and how they prefer to receive communication.
- Reach out and introduce yourself and introduce them to the Respect for Life Commission Chair and the Diocesan Director who oversees the commission.
- Build relationships with the parishes (Pastor, Deacon(s), Pastoral Assistant, Respect Life Committee/Coordinator, etc.)
- Be a resource for the parishes in your deanery.
- Survey the parishes to determine if they have a respect life committee/coordinator and collect their contact information.
- Help the Diocesan Family Life Office maintain contact lists and keep them updated
- For those parishes that do not have a respect life coordinator/committee, offer help in finding a person to lead a Parish respect life Committee and help train that person/group of people to help them build a committee in the parish.
- Attend Respect for Life Commission meetings and report on your activities, communications and work with the deaneries, parishes and schools.
- Communicate regularly with the parishes and schools about all activities, events, programs, etc. related to Respect for Life from the commission.
- The USCCB Respect life website ([respectlife.org](http://respectlife.org)) has monthly action guides for parishes, these resources should be shared with the deaneries, parishes and schools in a way that helps make it easy for them to utilize. Offer support and help in implementing action guide suggestions.

## Other Diocesan Clergy and Lay Members

Additional members of the respect life commission will help with planning and coordinating by taking on lead roles in the following areas:

- Education
  - Looking for training opportunities in all areas of respect for life to enhance our educational goals— abortion, sidewalk advocacy, Walking with Moms, Project Rachel, death penalty, end of life, mental health, gender identity, domestic violence, pornography, suicide, etc.
- Political/Policy
  - Coordinating with the Office of Life, Justice and Peace
- Hispanic outreach
  - Coordinating with the Office of Hispanic Ministry and individual deaneries/parishes
- Coordinating with other ministries and apostolates
  - Looking for opportunities to join efforts and/or improve communications
- Prayer/Liturgical
  - Coordinating with the Office of Worship and the USCCB and other approved resources
- Diocesan Events
  - Assisting with finding, planning, coordinating and executing respect life events
- Ambassadors to Women in Need
  - Reaching out to deaneries & parishes in an effort to find and train Ambassadors to support our local programs (Walking with Moms in Need, Project Rachel, PRC's, St. Martha's Baby Project)

**Note:** All outside groups, organizations, programs must be vetted and approved by the Director's of the Offices of Marriage & Family Life, Life Justice and Peace, and Faith Formation.